

Socialist Standard

Official journal Socialist Party of Gt Britain and World Socialist Party of Ireland

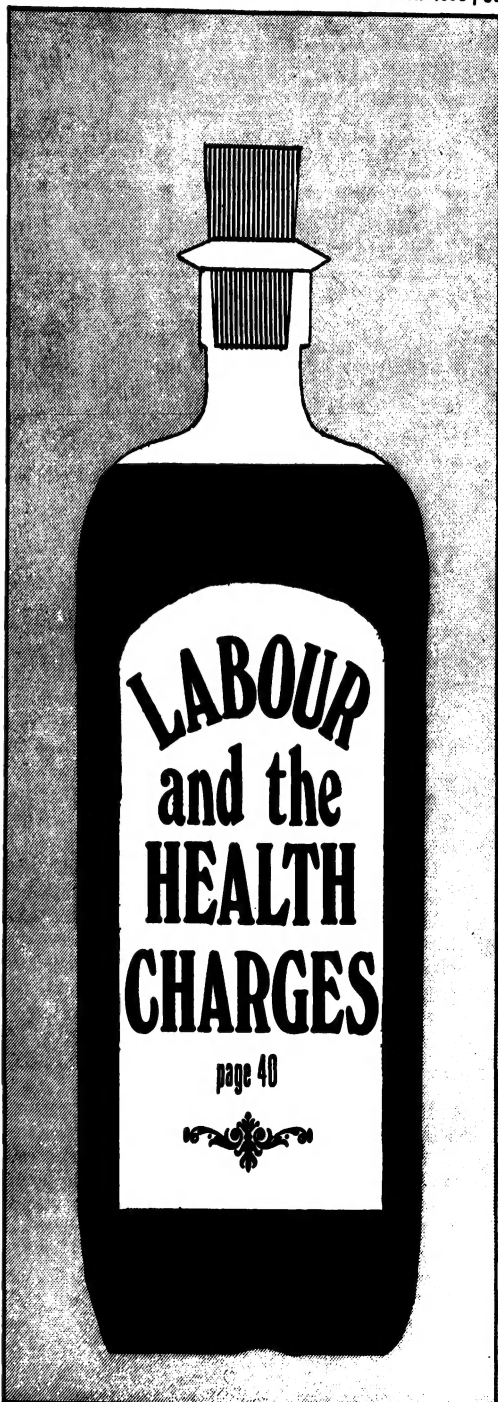
MARCH 1968 | 6d

**DRAFT
RESISTANCE
AND
CONSCIENCE**

VIETNAM

**THE
WOBBLIES**

**WHAT IS
CLASS?**



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MARCH 1968

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SOCIALIST PARTY OF GT. BRITAIN

The Executive Committee meets every Tuesday at the SPGB Head Office, 52 Clapham High Street, London, SW4 at 7.30 pm.

Orders for Literature should be sent to the Literature Department at the above address.

Correspondence for the Executive Committee should be sent to the General Secretary, SPGB, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 Tel. 01-622 3811.

Letters containing Postal Orders etc. should be sent to A. Waite, SPGB, at the above address. Postal orders and cheques should be crossed and made payable to the SPGB.

Articles, correspondence, notices of meetings, etc., for the "Socialist Standard" should be sent to the Socialist Standard Production Committee, 52 Clapham High St., London, SW4.

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND

The Executive Committee meets 4th Sunday of each month at the Head Office, 5 Granville Buildings, 53 High Street, Belfast 1, at 3.30 pm.

REVIEW



Trawlers in Distress

There is no quick solution to the tragic deaths in the deep sea fishing fleet—nothing that will appeal to any official inquiry, nor to zealous newspaper men, nor even to protesting relatives.

The fishermen would be safer in bigger and better ships, and with a mother ship to provide immediate help. The trawler owners are reluctant to invest in this kind of equipment, and are fighting against government restrictions on winter fishing, because they say this would damage the economics—in other words the profitability—of the industry.

For those who support capitalism, with its wealth production based on profit, that is a powerful argument.

But this is not a case of coffin ships being sent into impossibly dangerous waters. The fishermen themselves often take risks with their own safety; they penetrate into dangerous seas, they are reluctant to give their position away to other trawlers and do not, therefore, report regularly by radio, they often run before a storm instead of heaving to and riding it out because they want to be first into port with their catch.

They take these risks simply because they are paid on what they bring back. There is nothing new in workers, under this kind of pressure, putting their lives at hazard. An inspection of almost any factory or building site would reveal many cases of safety precautions being evaded in the chase after a bonus schedule or higher piecework pay.

Perhaps, if they were asked, the workers—including the trawlermen—would say they would not have it any other way. But what would that prove?

That some workers depend on their wage almost to the point of desperation. That sometimes they will accept appalling conditions, because they can see no alternative to the system which makes them. That capitalism's morals of acquisitiveness have hardened some workers to the point where even their own lives are cheap.

Vietnam

The latest flare-up in Vietnam showed that not only the Americans are capable of escalating the war there. It also showed that, in spite of all the bombing, which Washington always insisted was aimed at the North's supply lines, the Vietcong can still infiltrate in strength and can still equip their forces behind the lines.

Will this latest offensive be followed by the Americans stepping up their war effort? The working class have been well prepared for this and the newsreels and photographs of the recent fighting, including those of the outrages committed by both sides, will have stimulated those who advocate the use of nuclear weapons.

There is no reason to think that retaliation would not follow, perhaps from China. It is the blood-chilling work of capitalism's strategists to evaluate such perilous situations and to make their speculations in death and injury and destruction.

Another possibility is that the Vietcong attack was intended to strengthen their hand at any peace talks which may be in the offing.

This in itself says a lot about the nature of any such negotiations as may take place. It reveals that they will not be about peace but about conflict and that they will be, in their way, as much a trial of strength as any war.

It reveals that the people of Vietnam have nothing to hope for from negotiations and that even if the current war is brought to a halt the Far East will continue to be an area where irreconcilable interests clash over which group of capitalists shall have access to which markets, oil fields, rubber plantations . . .

Vietnam is simply another of capitalism's conflicts. In its protraction, its atrocities, its morals of violence and its frightening possibilities it is no more than another page in a fearsome history.

Mergers

It would be exceedingly difficult, in face of the greater and greater mergers which are taking place in industry, to keep up the once-popular myth that this is the Century of the Common Man.

The two latest headlines—of GEC and AEI and of British Motor Holdings and Leylands—were classics of their kind.

All four companies were already huge and had been built up after a series of previous mergers and takes-over. There are, it seems, no limits to the field of monopoly; size is no restriction and neither is competition as deadly rivals readily sink their differences in the new combines.

One of the driving forces in this is the hope that the mergers will bring economies in production and administration—including in the people who work in these.

It did not take GEC long to announce some of their cuts, in particular their plan to close the old AEI factory at Woolwich. The workers there reacted with stunned indignation; some of them have been at AEI for a very long time, many with their families.

But of course capitalism does not employ people as a benevolent service; nobody has a right to a job. People are employed if it is profitable for an employer to do so; if it is not, or if there is more profit to be made from sacking them, they will not be employed.

These facts are harsh, but facts nonetheless. If mergers do nothing else, they show workers their degrading place in capitalist society—as entries on an accountant's balance sheet, as faceless units in production to be analysed, coded, evaluated and, in some cases, dispensed with.

The employers, for their part, can only trust that the merger's economies will solve their problems. But the markets of capitalism remain untouchably anarchic. Perhaps the workers in the combines are not the only ones who are in for some shocks.

CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, WCI

SATURDAY 23 MARCH, 2 p.m.

Spring School

PRE- AND POST-MARXIST
ECONOMIC THEORIES

Lecturer : E. Hardy

Refreshment Available

SOCIALIST PARTY OF GT. BRITAIN

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GT. BRITAIN holds:

- 1) That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
- 2) That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
- 3) That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
- 4) That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
- 5) That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
- 6) That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
- 7) That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
- 8) The SOCIALIST PARTY OF GT. BRITAIN, therefore, enters the field of political action, determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.



Labour and the Health Charges

"The principle of the free health service has been breached, and I dread to think how much that breach might be widened in future years", said the President of the Board of Trade when he resigned from the Labour government in April 1951. He was objecting to imposing charges for National Health teeth and spectacles to raise money to spend on arms. His name was Harold Wilson.

Wilson was right. The new Tory government, elected in October of the same year, announced within six months that it was to bring in prescription charges. The Labour Party was up in arms playing on its image as builder and defender of the welfare state. In Parliament they did all they could to oppose the measure. Former Minister of Health Hilary Marquand declared on 1 May 1952:

On behalf of my right hon. and hon. Friends I say when we are returned to power we shall take steps, as soon as Parliamentary opportunity permits, to bring all these charges—charges for drugs, medicines, appliances, dentures, dental treatment and spectacles—to an end.

This pledge was written into the 1955 election manifesto, *Forward with Labour*:

In order to restore a free Health Service, we shall abolish all charges, including those on teeth, spectacles and prescriptions.

In 1959 the manifesto, *Britain Belongs to You*, repeated:

We shall also restore the free Health Service by abolishing all charges, starting with the prescription charge.

When in 1961 the Tories increased the prescription charge to 2/- Labour MPs again opposed the measure. Anthony Greenwood, now a Cabinet Minister, told Labour's 1963 Conference, on behalf of the Executive:

I repeat... the pledge we have given you before this, that we shall remove the existing charges in the National Health Service.

Again, for the 1964 election *The New Britain* read:

The most serious attack on the Health Service made by Conservative Ministers has been the increasing burden of prescription charges imposed by them on those least able to pay. These charges will be abolished. Labour emphatically rejects recent proposals to introduce new charges for General Practitioner services; our aim is to restore as rapidly as possible a completely free Health Service.

This time they were lucky. Wilson became Prime Minister and Kenneth Robinson Minister of Health. Sure enough, in a few months Labour redeemed part of its pledge. On 17 December Robinson announced the ending of prescription charges "which, since 1952, have created a financial barrier between the patient and the treatment he needs". He went on to state that in time they would also redeem the other part of their pledge:

There will remain charges for dental treatment and appliances and those for spectacles. It is our aim to abolish these charges also.

He did not say that for teeth and spectacles the financial barrier had existed since Gaitskell erected it in 1951.

In 1966, with *Time For Decision*, Labour faced the electorate, with the declaration that there were some principles they would not jettison "whatever the pressures". One of those principles was that "even in times of economic crisis those in need should be helped by the state". They brought forward their abolition of prescription charges as proof.

Less than two years later this principle is jettisoned. Wilson announced the restoration of prescription charges for many people at a rate of 2/6 an item. Far from abolishing the dental treatment charges, as Robinson promised, Labour raises them by 10/-. Charges for teeth and spectacles remain. After Wilson's announcement a Labour MP, Laurie Pavitt, confronted him with Marquand's pledge of May 1952. The official Hansard (daily) for 16 January quotes Wilson:

The statement by Mr. Marquand on February 1, 1952, was a pledge to remove the charges which had been introduced in 1951, and it is only fair to say to my hon. Friend that such has been the problem that we have faced that we have not ourselves removed those charges which were made on teeth and spectacles in 1951. I do not see how my hon. Friend can say that today's announcement represents a fatal breach of principle.

This won't do. If Marquand pledged Labour in 1952 to abolish the charges they themselves imposed in 1951, and Labour has failed to do this, then, by any standard, this is a breach of principle.

Wilson obviously found Pavitt's reminder highly embarrassing. The parliamentary report of *The Times* of 17 January exposes Wilson's confusion. According to this report, what Wilson said was:

The statement made by Mr. Marquand on May 1, 1952, was a pledge to restore the charges introduced in 1951. We have not restored those charges for teeth and spectacles, so I do not see how he can say that what I have announced reflects a breach in the principle.

Another reporter, recorded in the *Financial Times* of the same date, confirms that Wilson said "we have not restored these charges on teeth and spectacles". This, in his embarrassment, Wilson mistakenly has Marquand pledging Labour to restore the charges! But his remark about there being no breach of principle only makes sense if he really meant to say that Labour had not restored teeth and spectacle charges. Perhaps Wilson thought that Labour had ended these charges along with those for prescriptions in 1965. In any event, he was dodging the issue. Marquand pledged Labour to abolish all health charges and bringing back those on prescriptions is a breach of that pledge. Wilson seems to have had Hansard doctored to cover up his confusion, but despite this, his illogical argument comes out. Putting into Hansard something different from what was said is not uncommon, but it is nice to know that even Wilson has a guilty conscience over some of the pledges capitalism has forced him to break.

Aneurin Bevan called the National Health Service "pure Socialism" as it took buying and selling out of the treatment of the sick. True, Socialism does mean the ending of buying and selling, but Socialism is a social system that must replace capitalism; you cannot have bits of Socialism within capital-

ist society. In Socialism class ownership, the barrier to the community's free use of the means of wealth production, will have been removed. All will have free access to what they need. But the NHS is not even free in the sense that Bevan meant. Part of the insurance stamp that is deducted from wages and salaries is technically a "contribution" to the service. Wilson's announcement that this deduction is to go up by 6d. will remind people of this.

So-called free services under capitalism are only so in appearance. Capitalism is based on the exclusion of the great majority of society from the ownership of the means of production. Consequently, they must find an employer to live; they must enter the labour market to sell their mental and physical energies for a wage. The value of human labour-power is fixed in the same way as that of other commodities: by the amount of socially necessary labour needed to produce and reproduce it. Thus, wages never amount to much more than enough to keep a man (and his family) fit to work at his particular job. If the working class has to pay little or nothing for medical treatment or housing, then their cost of living is subsidised and employers do not have to pay so high a wage. Employers do not have to make allowance for what their workers might have to spend on their health or housing. Since "free services" are paid out of taxation and taxation, in the end, falls only on those who own property, such schemes are really a way of spreading the cost of maintaining the working class in a fit state to work, over the capitalist class as a whole. The NHS has been correctly dubbed the back-to-work service. Except perhaps for minor ailments, the rich do not use it; they prefer to pay doctors and nursing homes for a better service. The aim of the NHS is to patch up workers as cheaply and quickly as possible. And it cannot even do even this minimum task adequately.

It is not because Socialists think highly of the NHS that we have produced Labour's past pledges on health charges. We do not think that Labour has betrayed us. They have, however, betrayed the millions of workers who voted Labour in the past four general elections. If you were amongst these millions, it is your duty to find out why Labour has betrayed you. Was it because Labour ministers are incompetent? Did they deliberately mislead you? Or, is it just that

politics is corrupt? Labour leaders may or may not be incompetent, cynical or insincere. It matters little. Labour has been forced to break its word not because of the personal failings of its leaders, but because of the nature of the social system which they imagined they could control. Labour has always claimed that it could impose human and social priorities on capitalism. The NHS has always been given as a shining example. So it is poetic justice that Labour should be the agent of capitalism's profit priority getting its own back.

Capitalism cannot be made to work in the interests of the whole community. It is a class system that runs on profits and so any government that tries to improve social conditions at the expense of profits, within the framework of capitalism, is bound to fail. The economic forces of capitalism will in the end dictate priorities to the government, as Labour now knows. Since they got power in 1964 capitalism has not given them a chance and, of course, it never will, despite the pathetic pleas of Wilson and Jenkins for another two years to put things right.

We are here fighting Labour on its own ground. It is they who made defence of the welfare state one of their principles, and used it as a means to win support. Socialists do not accept that the welfare state was the exclusive work of the Labour Party. Welfare services are a must at a certain stage of capitalist development. If free medicines and free prescriptions are something to do with Socialism, how explain that the Health Insurance Act of 1911 provided this for workers insured under it? The then Liberal government has no socialist pretensions. Quite the contrary, it was as anti-working class as the present Labour government. The last recorded case of striking workers being killed by troops occurred under Asquith.

The imposition of health charges is a further Labour attack on the living standards of the working class. No doubt workers will resist by stepping up the trade union struggle. But this is only a defensive action. We advise workers to recognise that capitalism cannot work for them, whether run by Labour, Tories or Liberals; and to withdraw their support from these and other capitalist parties and join and support a genuine Socialist Party dedicated to replacing capitalism with Socialism.

A.L.R.

50 YEARS AGO

The Morality of Capitalism

As goods were produced, not that they should be used by their producers, but only to be sold at a profit, the quality of the articles was of little concern to the manufacturer so long as the purchaser could be

deceived. The sale of adulterated foodstuffs, for instance, spread to proportions which would have seemed incredible in the 'simple age' when people prepared food to eat. Bright declared adulteration a 'legitimate form of competition'. Rubbish, in our civilised age, is sold as food, poison as drink, and the all-producing proletariat are clad in shoddy clothing, and in paper boots. Fortunes are built up, by the sale of quack 'patent medicines' and 'cures' for every imaginable ailment. The advertising of goods has become an art in itself, an act of lying and deceit. Every article is pronounced from a hundred glaring posters to be better than all its competitors. Under

capitalism it has become impossible to separate lying from the most everyday economic relations. The worker lies to his boss about his qualifications; the manufacturer and salesman lies to his customers from the hoarding and the Press, by his agent or over the counter. The 'business lie' has become 'not a real lie at all', a mere convention which everybody expects and everybody sees through.

Such are some of the glorious results of free competition and the 'rights of the individual'.

From the SOCIALIST STANDARD
March 1918

APRIL SOCIALIST STANDARD

See the April issue for special articles on:

The Socialist Party and the Second International

Nuclear Weapons and World Strategy

Inquest on Keynes

AGAINST WAR

Draft Resistance and Conscience

Over Vietnam, the majority of Americans go willingly to war—or at any rate keep their fears and doubts to themselves. President Johnson, under pressure about the war, replies that this is no time to argue; American boys are in battle over there. Most Americans accept this cynically emotional appeal and close their ranks—and perhaps their minds as well.

Only a minority, now graced (or cursed) with the name Draft Dodgers, stand aside and refuse to join in the killing. These young men, opposed to the Vietnam war, refuse service in the army under the United States selective service system. They sometimes destroy their draft cards, sometimes return them to the authorities—even give them to the enemy, the Vietnamese National Liberation Front.

Some of the objectors—for example the Quakers—are acting in line with a persistent opposition to war wherever it is fought. Others resist only the war in Vietnam:

I am not a pacifist or a conscientious objector in the narrow sense, but I am a conscientious objector with regard to the Vietnam war. I do not object to conscription as such. (Michael Haag.)

I totally want to dissociate myself from my country's course in what I consider a disgraceful, cynical war. It is not a war against communism. (Joel Gladstone.)

(Both quoted in *The American*, 15/12/67.)

We can see how small a minority the draft dodgers are, from the figures issued by the U.S. Justice Department of prosecutions for draft evasion. About 160,000 men are registered for the draft each month, only a part of them being called up. In the year July 1965/June 1966 the call up was 336,530; only 658 men were prosecuted. For the year July 1966/June 1967 the figures were: call up 288,000; prosecutions 1,409.

Young Americans can apply for registration as conscientious objectors but, according to the *Sunday Times* (21/1/68) the only people likely to be granted this are Quakers or members of the American Friends' Church. (In this country, during 1914/18, the C. O. Tribunals rarely accepted what they called a "political" objection to war.) Very often, then, the only way out is to evade the draft laws—refuse to register, destroy or return the draft card. The legal penalty for this can be a fine of up to \$10,000 and a prison sentence up to five years. There can also be illegal penalties—victimisation in employment or, as some of the card burners have experienced, a beating up from patriotic hooligans.

The draft dodgers are the latest in a long line of war resisters—a line with a mixed pedigree. There were the Christians who refused to serve in the Roman *militiae*; the Quakers who went by sledge to Moscow to protest against the Crimean War; the unending resolutions of the Second International. In this there is a discernible change; the development of capitalism had its effect on the anti-war movement. For capitalism made war total, with everyone under fire and with a modern state machine recruiting all its resources—including people—if necessary by compulsion. But at the same time capitalism needed to school its people in its productive techniques, which gave rise to a working class

with political rights, often seeing capitalism's problems as political issues. Thus when conscription came in, the opposition to it was often in political terms. Pacifism, in the words of Christopher Driver tended to become secularised.

In his book *Pacifism and Conscientious Objection* Professor G. C. Field, who sat on a C.O. Tribunal from 1940 to 1944, recalls among the people who came before him:

... adherents of fifty one different religious bodies... those, comparatively few in number, whose objections were based on ethical or humanitarian grounds independently of any religious beliefs... a few whom we classified as political objectors and a few, also, who could only be described as objectors on aesthetic grounds.

This was the result of a development which started in 1914. Before the First World War, Britain was the only major European power to rely on a volunteer army. As the war drew closer, a conscription pressure group grew in strength and in 1902 gave birth to the National Service League (President the Duke of Wellington; supporters Rudyard Kipling, the Duke of Westminster, the Bishop of Chester.)

The outbreak of war, and the growing threat of conscription, threw up an opposition—the No Conscription Fellowship (Chairman Clifford Allen; supporters Fenner Brockway, Bertrand Russell, Bernard Boothby.) On December 3 1914 the NCF declared itself:

... it would, we think, be as well if men of enlistment age who are not prepared to take a combatant's part, whatever the penalty for refusing, formed an organisation for mutual counsel and action.

Stage by stage, as the war settled down into a pattern of interminable murder, the government progressed towards conscription—its appetite, as Philip Snowden pointed out, growing by what it fed upon. In March 1916 the final blow came; the Military Service Act gave the unmarried man of military age a choice between enlisting immediately or being called up in his group. If he did neither he would be "deemed to have enlisted"—in other words he was a soldier whether he liked it or not.

This was a vital provision. It meant that an objector who was turned down by his tribunal was instructed to report to his unit. If he did not go he was a deserter; if he was taken and then refused to put on a uniform he was disobeying a military command. As he was legally a soldier he was subject to army discipline; he could be sent to a military prison, court martialled, sentenced to undergo such experiences as Field Punishment Number One or even—as happened to thirty four men—could be sentenced to be shot.

Under army detention the C.O.s were subjected to a variety of brutality and torture. In the civil prisons they fared only a little better. J. Allen Skinner was one who spent time in both Wandsworth and Wormwood Scrubs during 1916/17. In 1960 he was in prison again—in Brixton after a Ban the Bomb demonstration. He told the Governor of Brixton of his earlier sentences. "That", said the governor feelingly "must have been a terrible experience." (See *The Disarmers* by Christopher Driver.)

And so it was—for Skinner and for all the other objectors to that war. There were about sixteen thousand of them (12,000 with "political" objections) and seventy three died as a result of the treatment they received.

The pacifist movement, dying down after 1918, came back to life in 1935, once more at the approach of a major European war. That was the year when the Peace Pledge Union was formed; over 100,000 signed its renunciation of war. The PPU was swept along on a wave of enthusiasm; in 1937 its Leader, the Rev. Dick Sheppard, was elected Rector of Glasgow University.

The 1939 war, as many thought it would, exposed the Pledge. (Professor Field claimed: "... a clear-sighted pacifist friend said to me, the Peace Pledge was really a piece of bluff.") Only about 65,000 men registered as C.O.s during the entire war and of course not all of these had signed the Pledge. British capitalism had learned a lesson. Conscription was in force before war was declared, the tribunals operated with a lighter hand (about seventy per cent of objectors were found to be "genuine") nobody was "deemed to have enlisted", sentences (there were about four thousand of them) were served in civil prisons. There was no torture, no death sentences, hardly any discernible victimisation, no outrages worthy of the name.

The Second World War saw a decline in the numbers of "political" objectors; from about 12,000 in 1914/18 to about 3,250 in 1939/45. This can be explained by the fact that most of these in the first war were members of the ILP which was then part of the Labour Party. By 1939 the ILP had all but disappeared and the Labour Party no longer had any doubts about its support for capitalism's wars.

What of the pacifists? The word covers a multitude of opinions on war, but implies the basic agreement of regarding war in the idealistic sense, as an evil in itself which can be abolished by a policy of righteousness. Thus Dr. Alfred Salter in his pamphlet *Religion of a C.O.* (1914):

There is a great place waiting in history for the first nation

PLYMOUTH

Socialist Standard available from
Plymouth Newsagency, 13 The Broadway,
Plymouth.

Any sympathiser available for propaganda
activity in Plymouth area during early
summer months contact I. McLaughlin,
Head office 52 Clapham High St.
London, SW4.

TEDDY LAKE RETIRES

Last month Teddy Lake retired from Head
Office activity. He has been our Treasurer
since 1944, when he took over "temporarily"
after his predecessor, Jack Butler, was
killed in an air raid. We shall miss his
genial and warm presence at Head
Office.

P.H.

NEW GROUP AT EALING

A new Socialist Party group has been
formed in Ealing. Details of meetings will
be announced later. Further details from:
E. Critchfield, 55 Meadvale Rd., Ealing,
W.5.

... that will dare to base its national existence on righteous
dealing, and not on force...

This is typical of the pacifist attempt to deal with war in
isolation from the very surrounding conditions which cause
it. It avoids the all-important question of why governments
base their existence on force—even a government like the
Attlee administration, which included men who were object-
ors with Dr. Salter in 1914/18. What did their pacifism do
for their policies, when they had the chance to try a little
righteous dealing?

This same question was still being evaded when the Second
World War came. On September 8 1939 the PPU Council
agreed that "... in all ways possible the PPU should strive
to make the Government publish terms of peace by consent." In
August 1944 they were demonstrating for a negotiated
peace and "just peace terms". (See *I Renounce War* by Sybil
Morrison.)

It is a massive contradiction to accept all the pre-conditions
for war and social violence—to accept the capitalist
system and its governments, its diplomacy, its "peace" talks
and treaties—and at the same time to object to war. This
basic fallacy runs like a thread through pacifist thought.
The people who marched from San Francisco to Moscow
in 1961 distributed a leaflet along their route which said:

We believe that the Soviet Union and the United States with
other countries should pool their resources to remove such
suffering—by using the money now wasted on weapons of
destruction.

And Richard Gregg, in *The Power of Nonviolence*, says:

Nonviolent resistance is more efficient than war because it
costs far less in money as well as in lives and suffering.

Pacifists like Gregg believe that war and violence are an
effect of inferior ideas ("... a large part of the activities of
the state are founded upon a mistake, namely, the idea that
fear is the strongest and best sanction for group action and
association.") But it is impossible to conceive of capitalism
without war. The private ownership of the means of produc-
tion divides the world into antagonistic classes, competing
firms, rival nations and international power blocs. It is this
competitive nature of capitalism which causes its wars, which
are as much a part of the system as the governments, the
money and the treaties which the pacifists are prepared to
accept.

Modern war is fought to settle the squabbles of capital-
ism's master class; it does not involve the interests of
the ordinary people except that it brings them nothing but
suffering. If the working class refuse to fight—as we say
they should—it should be on these grounds—and this should
apply to all war, not just to Vietnam, or Korea, or Algeria.
If the pacifist, idealist objection to war is futile how much
more so is that which stands out against only one particular
war?

The draft dodgers may claim to have made a start. If so,
they must go on to realise that there is nothing special about
Vietnam—nothing special about its causes, its history, its
horrors. The war resisters have won the honourable dis-
tinction of showing that capitalism need not have it all its
own way—that even in face of overwhelming propaganda
the working class can recognise a problem and protest. They
have shown their power, and that courage does not have
to wear a uniform. These qualities will stand us in good
stead, when we have a society where war is only a black
memory.

IVAN

BACKGROUND

The Wobblies



The first sign of a workers radical movement of any appreciable size in America followed a similar path to the English movement during the thirties of the last century. It was loose, sweeping, all-embracing, and came to grief when the internal elements sorted themselves out and attempted to express their different ideas in action. Though hazy and ill-informed, it was yet fundamentally working class. This movement was the Knights of Labour, founded in 1869. The new movement was secret and hedged about by ritual, grip, sign and password. It both sought to protect the interests of labour against violent and ruthless oppression and, at the same time, advocated a new society, the basis of which was to be the nationalisation of certain public utilities combined with co-operative institutions. It recognised no identity of interest between employer and worker. One of its prominent advocates, Powderley, stated "To point out a way to utterly destroy the system [wage system] would be a pleasure to me."

The Knights of Labour made slow progress until 1885 when it fought a successful railway strike against the powerful Jay Gould employers combination, which brought a rush of members. It failed however to secure the adhesion of the skilled workers, the aristocracy of labour at the time, and in due course the struggles between the elements concerned with fighting for better wages and conditions of labour, the trade union element, and the theoretical and utopian groups, combined with a number of unsuccessful strikes, reduced the organisation to impotence.

In opposition to the Knights of Labour another organisation entered the field in 1881, the American Federation of Labour, which catered almost entirely for skilled labour. At first its leader, Samuel Gompers, gave lip service to socialist principles. This was soon eclipsed in the work of building up a wealthy and exclusive organisation of skilled workers that received recognition from the employers by adhering to the anti-working class principles of co-operation with the employers, opposition to strikes, and the barring of lower paid workers by the demand for high trade union dues. These skilled workers endeavoured to maintain a closed shop on the ground that the entrance of unskilled labour into their field of labour was a menace and a threat to their standards of living. It was this principle that induced the AF of L as well as other groups of workers, to discriminate against negro workers.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, owing to the feverish industrial expansion, the conditions of the workers, particularly the unskilled and the immigrants grew steadily worse. As one writer put it: "By 1890 the workers were enclosed within the wages system by the exhaustion of the free lands which for generations had served as a refuge for the more rebellious masses of the industrial centres". (O'Neal).

In 1877 the Socialist Labour Party was formed which was to have considerable influence on the first conference of the IWW through its most knowledgeable member, Daniel De Leon. This party advocated the ballot as the best policy for working men but declared that members should "maintain friendly relations with trade unions and promote their formation upon socialist principles."

At the outset of its career the SLP was affected with the contemporary co-operative and reformist ideas, most of which it gradually shed, particularly under the influence of Daniel De Leon, taking its stand more and more upon the basis of the class struggle. However the divergent views of members on the respective merits of industrial and political action, and also upon its centralisation of power within the party, led to a split and the formation of the Socialist Party of America at the end of the century.

Up to 1895 the SLP had attempted to capture the craft unions by the policy of "boring from within", but their efforts met with such little success that they gave up the job and decided to form their own trade union, the Socialist Trades and Labour Alliance.

In the meantime three militant trade unions had been developing—The Railway Union, the Western Federation of Miners and the National Union of Brewery Workers. Of these the Western Federation of Miners was to be the most influential section in the early development of the IWW.

In January 1905 a secret conference was held in Chicago attended by members of the Western Federation of Miners, the Brewery Workers, the Socialist Party of America and the SLP. This Conference drafted an invitation to representatives of labour unions and socialist factors in both America and Europe "to help found a revolutionary labour movement on industrial lines." The Manifesto stated that the new movement "must consist of one great industrial union embracing all industries, providing for craft autonomy locally, industrial autonomy internationally, and working class unity generally." This was in harmony with Father Hagerty's chart, which laid out in a circle, lined up every department of industry, transportation, agriculture leading to an inner circle of controls and a centre of general administration. It is a pity that Patrick Renshaw in his book* has not included this chart amongst his illustrations as it gives a good picture of what the IWW aimed at.

At the Industrial Union Congress in Chicago, June 1905, the IWW was founded. Those who took part in its foundation held widely divergent views which came into conflict at the Congress and caused internal strife during the following years. The delegates consisted of representatives of anarchism, industrial unionism, Socialist Labour Party and Socialist Party of America members as well as pure and simple trade unionists.

The first bone of contention was political action. After some fierce discussion in which anarchists like Trautmann and Lucy Parsons bitterly opposed any connection with politics De Leon succeeded in getting included in the Preamble the following clause:

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and take hold of that which they produce by their labour through an economic organisation of the working class, without affiliation with any political party.

* THE WOBBLIES. By Patrick Renshaw. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 45s.

Two years later, when the SLP left the official party the clause was altered to read:

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organise as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production and abolish the wage system.

At least the latter phrase is clear and did not lend itself to the muddled interpretation of the original.

In 1905 and 1906 internal strife was fierce centring upon antagonism to the SP of A members who openly advocated political action. At the 1906 conference the De Leonites united with the anarchists to expel the SP of A members from the IWW. The next year the anarchists and industrial unionists succeeded in removing the SLP which formed a rival IWW which did not last long.

Over the years the IWW carried on its agitation with varying success and against the fierce hostility of employers and governments. There is not space in this review to record its history. The IWW set out to organise in the beginning its unskilled migrant workers who were being harried from one place to another and lived on starvation pay. The author sums up the position as follows:

Thus during the twenty years from 1891-1910, more than 8,000,000 of the 12,500,000 foreigners who settled in America came from Italy, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, Slovakia, Croatia, and Greece. These people, from peasant farming or trading stock, were alien by race, religion, language and customs to the American way. The sharp transition bewildered, often angered them, much more than it had the Irish or Germans of an earlier era. So it was among this new, many-tongued nation, called into being to nourish the appetite of industry, that the Wobblies concentrated much of their revolutionary effort.

According to Patrick Renshaw the IWW membership never exceeded 100,000 at any one time in spite of the energy put into the movement and the territory covered. Its statements and even its songs show that its advocates understood the class struggle but unfortunately started off on the wrong foot by holding aloof from political action. In spite of their mistakes and internal strife its advocates were unquestionably sincere and courageous in their pursuit of industrial unionism. They must have been for their organisers and advocates literally took their lives in their hands wherever they went, meeting with persecution and brutality at the hands of local capitalist organisations and, in some instances, like Frank Little and Wesley Everest being savagely done to death. Paul Brissenden describes the attitudes towards them as follows in the preface to his *History*, an excellent and sympathetic work on the same subject published in 1919:

The popular attitude towards the Wobblies among employers, public officials and the public generally corresponds to the popular notion that they are all arch-fiends and the dregs of society. It is the hang-them-all-at-sunrise attitude. A high official of the Federal Department of Justice in one of our western states gave the writer an instance. On a recent visit to a small town in a distant part of the state he happened upon the Sheriff. That officer, in reply to a question, explained that they were "having no trouble at all with the Wobs" "When a Wobbly comes to town" he explained, "I just knock him over the head with a night stick and throw him in the river. When he comes up he beats it out of town." Incidentally it may be said that in such a situation almost any poor man, if he be without a job or visible means of support is

assumed to be, ipso facto, an IWW. Being a Wobbly, the proper thing for him is pickhandle treatment or—if he is known to be a strike agitator—a little neck—the party.

The influence of the IWW spread to different countries but it was probably at its peak just before the 1914-1918 war. It was opposed to the war and in 1917-1918 over a hundred of its leading members were arrested, charged with sabotage and subversion and given sentences of up to 20 years in jail. This practically put an end to the movement although it still carries on in a small way and publishes the *Industrial Worker* from Chicago.

In spite of the bitterness of its struggles the members of the IWW had a sense of humour and a grasp of the class position as witness the songs they sang, such as the following by Joe Hill:

Long-haired preachers come out every night
Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right;
But when asked how 'bout something to eat
They will answer with voices so sweet:

You will eat, bye and bye,
In that glorious land above the sky;
Work and pray, live on hay,
You'll get fare in the sky when you die.

Working men of all countries, unite
Side by side we for freedom will fight,
When the world and its wealth we have gained
To the grafters we'll sing this refrain:

You will eat, bye and bye,
When you've learned how to cook and to fry
Chop some wood, 'twill do you good,
And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye.

Yes, the Wobblies had a sense of humour and, in spite of the fact that they were on the wrong track, the present writer has always had an admiration for their courage and persistence in the face of persecution.

GILMAC

WHAT IS CLASS? concluded, from page 46]

other 90 per cent who must seek, and try to maintain, employment simply because they do *not* own sufficient wealth to live without working.

In latter years it has become unfashionable to be ostentatiously wealthy. As Mrs. Maitland-Robinson said to William Hickey of the *Daily Express* recently when interviewed about the selling of £6 million worth of the family's shares in Radio Rentals, "Although my husband is a millionaire we all lead a simple life really." Paul Getty, with a financial empire of about £300 million has often said the same sort of thing. But since the relationship between the two classes appears as one of buyer and seller (reflecting the basic one of owner and non-owner) however it may be dignified by euphemisms, and since there is no motive for the buyers to buy except in expectation of increasing their wealth, it follows—and is borne out in the perpetual practice of wage and salary negotiations—that their interests are inevitably opposed. They thus form the only two classes of any importance in modern society.

S. STAFFORD

What is Class?

'Class' in the sense with which most people use the word means more than a simple classification for a particular purpose. But there is a great deal of disagreement and uncertainty when it comes to identifying or defining a class in the social sense.

There are a number of demands which must be fulfilled by any satisfactory attempt to outline distinct classes in modern society. In the first place, such an outline must take into account people's subjective feelings about class. More important, however, is to acknowledge the objective reality underlying such feelings. Also, any satisfactory definition of class in modern society should apply equally well in all modern countries, and so it would have to discount vestigial survivals from earlier forms of society, such as royalty and aristocracy. And it should not accept as a class something which is merely a section in a uniformly graded scale. However fuzzy the boundary lines may be, a class should have at least one characteristic which differs in something other than degree from any other class. Finally, such a definition should take into account, if not all, at least the great majority of people.

Most definitions of class fall short in one or another of these requirements, and so lay themselves open to the charge of giving a partial (in both senses) picture of society. For example, it is common to group people according to their income. Yet the majority of statistics show that income is virtually a uniformly graded scale, and any attempt at grouping is purely arbitrary. This fact, together with the growth of graded income taxing in most countries has led many people who favoured this method of grouping to feel that class has ceased to exist in the last few years.

Closely related is the attempt to group people according to occupation or education. But the degree of fluidity with which people can change their occupations, and the growing rapidity with which economic and technological developments are changing the occupations themselves, has shown this, too, to be inadequate as a basis of class distinction. The post-war rise in the importance and income of the engineer, and the contemporary decline of the clerical worker are cases among many which demonstrate not only the parochialism of people's subjective feelings about class but also the invalidity of classification by occupation as such.

Nevertheless, people's feelings about the class nature of occupation and income cannot be entirely without foundation, but what is the reality which underlies them? In the first place, the occupation of most people is their job, which is to say that they must do it in order to make their living. In the second place, job and income are closely tied together, so that it is fair to say that it is upon his job in all its aspects that a man is judged by his fellows.

But what is a job? A man's job is the central part of his life, and if he is unemployed for any length of time he deteriorates not only economically but psychologically. This has for a long time been recognised as true for lower paid workers, but even the executive is doing exactly the same as the men he has been responsible for employing—offering

his skill, experience and energy for sale—by the hour, day, week, month or year.

The reason for employing a manager or an executive is the same reason for employing anybody—profit; that since these are the people who undertake the employment of the £16-£20 a week workers, and yet are themselves employed, both must be employed by someone else; and that the size of the wage packet makes no difference to the buyer-seller relationship of a job. This is where the jargon of 'management v. workers' has repeatedly clouded the facts in the last few years. A recent *Guardian* article draws attention to the importance of a manager's identifying himself with 'the objectives of the enterprise'. But, as his primary relationship with the firm for which he works is that of buyer and seller, he is being asked to do a piece of double-think since, in any market, the buyer will always try to buy as cheaply as possible and the seller to get as high a price as possible.

Since the majority of people are in the position of having to sell their working ability for roughly fifty years of their lives in order to gain a livelihood, to whom can they sell? The salaried executives who undertake their employment do so in the name of the company they work for, and the company exists for the sole reason of making profits. If it did not, it would go out of business. The company is owned by its shareholders. These are, through their paid executives, the buyers of people's skill and energy. In this they form the other side of the buyer-seller relationship, and in this they constitute a distinct and opposed class. That some of them may participate in the running of the business in which they have shares, or even that of someone else, is incidental. Their main function from society's point of view is as providers of capital if they have enough of it. With the enormous growth and ramified development of limited liability companies, holding companies, and unit trusts, with the flowering of a sophisticated stock market and the international ebb and flow of capital, any one capitalist may well be only a minority shareholder in a great number of companies. But, together, they own all companies and—through state bonds and government stock, local authority borrowings and building society shares—the great bulk of nationalised industries, houses and land.

Of course, anyone may become a shareholder, and there are thousands of people who, although they have no choice but to work for their living, nevertheless own some shares. In aggregate, however, they own a very small proportion of the total. The class division in modern society is statistical; the dividing line is not as clear-cut as in mediaeval society; the edge is blurred and mobility from one class to another goes on to some extent all the time. But, if the curve is cut at different points, it can be shown that one per cent of the population of Great Britain owns 50 per cent of the wealth, ten per cent own 90 per cent, and so on. As a reasonable approximation, therefore, it may be said that 10 per cent of the population owns the civilised world (as well as large stretches of the underdeveloped countries) and employs the

(continued bottom previous page)

FINANCE AND INDUSTRY

Nationalisation and the Commercial Jungle



The shortcomings of capitalism are widely felt but little understood. The Labour Party see some of these as being due to the unbridled competition resulting from private enterprise and supposed Tory policies. To them capitalism is competition, private enterprise and the Tories. Their answer is to restrain competition through government intervention in industry and through nationalisation. Add planning to this and you get their idea of Socialism. But if this is Socialism, then the Tories too could call themselves socialists.

The government's proposed aluminium smelter scheme is an example of how little can nationalised industries be isolated from commercial wrangles. In the past it was cheaper to import aluminium, but now it is expected to be a paying proposition to do the refining and smelting in Britain. The proposed scheme set off a competitive scramble between the nationalised atomic energy, electricity and coal industries. Aluminium smelting requires large, uninterrupted supplies of electricity. New nuclear power stations were expected to provide the cheapest source of power. But Alcan proposes to use electricity generated in their own coal-fired power station. It was this that caused the storm amongst the nationalised industries. The Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) complained that Alcan would be getting coal cheaper than they themselves were. The recently nationalised steel industry made the same complaint and added the objection that manufacturers of a rival metal were being given an unfair advantage. Again the NCB has been complaining that the government's fuel policy unfairly discriminated against coal and in favour of atomic power. On top of trying to sort out the rival claims of the aluminium companies and to settle the squabbles of the nationalised industries, the government has come under fire from abroad. Overseas producers, especially Britain's EFTA partner Norway, do not like the idea of losing part of their market. The Norwegian government suspects that the EFTA treaty may be violated, claiming that aluminium cannot be produced profitably in Britain without subsidy.

This is the predicament of those, like

Labour, who would tame capitalism whilst leaving its basis intact. Socialists do not care who gets the contract or what kind of fuel is used or whether EFTA agreements are violated. We know that capitalism is based on the monopoly of the means of wealth production by a minority. Buying and selling and the commercial jungle result from this. Our answer is to replace minority ownership by the common ownership of the means of production by society as a whole. Then there would be no basis for commerce or competition as there would really be a common social interest.

Rich and Poor

The second United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) meeting in Delhi was faced with problems that would have defeated the mythical wisdom of Solomon. They will also defeat this international gathering of talented experts. Unctad's aim is to find ways of bridging the gap that exists between the so-called developed and underdeveloped nations. Statistics are used showing the differences between America and India in per capita income, steel production, electricity output and so on. Giving the impression that India equals poverty and America affluence and so the conclusion that poverty in India will be eradicated when average income and production figures reach those of America. So, Unctad claims, what is needed is more trade and technical development. But it is on the ques-

tion of trade that their plans founder.

The underdeveloped countries are urging easier access for themselves to the markets of the developed countries. The developed countries are trying to balance their own trade and payments. This involves cutting imports and stimulating exports. So they are faced with the same problem as those they say they are trying to help: more exports. The main exports from the poorer countries are raw materials. But their plight in recent years has not been due to any lack of enterprise or too slow increase in productivity, as is generally thought, but to too much of these. The problem has been that the prices of their export commodities have been falling because the market cannot absorb the extra production. This is what the Unctad experts have to sort out. The best capitalism has come up with so far is giant bonfires of coffee, cocoa and other products, or, what amounts to the same thing, schemes for curtailing production. Proposals that more manufactured goods should be imported by the developed countries from the less developed are worth as much as the suggestion that Brazil should import large quantities of coffee.

Just as all nations are faced with trade problems so they all also have poverty problems. America is not entirely populated by Rockefellers and Henry Fords. Nor is everybody in India destitute. Living in affluence there are not only the remnants of the pre-capitalist rulers but also home-grown captains of industry who are just as wealthy as their American counterparts. The problem is not one of rich and poor nations, but of rich and poor social classes. The solution to the world-wide poverty problem is the establishment of a world community in which production is geared solely to meeting human needs. The problem is not one of trade, aid or technology but of how society is organised.

JEF

HULL STUDENTS DEBATE

Is Russia Capitalist?

Can nationalisation be socialist? And should the workers put their trust in leaders? These two crucial questions were raised during a recent confrontation between a Socialist and a Trotskyist.

Over 50 students attended a debate staged by Hull University Marxist Society and titled "Is Russia Capitalist?" Yes, said A. Buick for the Socialist Party of Gt. Britain. No, said Tom Kemp (eco-

nomics lecturer at Hull) on behalf of the so-called Socialist Labour League.

Mr. Kemp opened. He said that there were those who thought Russia was Socialist, those who found it an enigma, and those (including the Socialist Party) who maintained a "sectarian aloofness." He disagreed with all of these. He didn't think Russia was Socialist, and he denounced the Russian government's crimes against the

working class. But, he maintained, these crimes were not caused by the nationalised economy. They were alien to it. He thought there was a number of features of capitalism which did not exist in Russia: a disproportion between production and consumption goods; a falling rate of profit; financial difficulties of the sort which led to the 1929 crash.

Referring to the recent sterling crisis and devaluation he commented: "No international speculation against the rouble could conceivably affect the Soviet government's policy in that way. That would be utterly fantastic." Mr. Kemp also thought there was no expansionist tendency in Russia—at least not of the imperialist sort as in the West. The ruling bureaucracy, though it lived in high style, was not a class, as it was so limited by the political set-up.

Our comrade Buick began by defining Socialism: a world without frontiers, democratically controlled, where production would be for use, not for profit. The Bolshevik coup of 1917 was neither a Socialist revolution nor a working-class takeover. The Bolsheviks used Marxist phrases but were really descended from a long line of Russian insurrectionaries who were conspiratorial and elitist. Their ideas could be traced back to the Jacobins.

State control did not mean that there was no ruling class. There were several cases in history where state ownership had been a form of class rule. The Catholic Church in feudal times was a ruling group which was not hereditary, from which people could be easily dismissed, and which was not based on individual ownership. All the same, it was still a property system with class rule.

Buick said capital was not a thing, but a social relation. It meant there was wage labour, massive production of commodities and accumulation out of profits. All these existed in Russia, and so did the falling tendency of the profit rate.

In the open discussion session, supporters of the "Communist" Party argued that the government had done all it could, considering Russia had been so backward. It was pointed out, however, that Socialists didn't say the government ought to have a change of heart. On the contrary, they *couldn't* introduce Socialism. Only the majority of the working class could do that, and the Russian workers still wanted capitalism, like most workers of the world.

Some economics students, apparently unused to political argument, seemed amazed that anyone should think the workers were exploited anywhere at all. Shouldn't entrepreneurs be rewarded? Buick pointed out that wealth was produced by human labour. In capitalism, profit was derived from paying workers less than what they produced. In Socialism there would not be a "fair return" to workers. On the contrary, wages would be abolished and all goods and services would be free.

One student thought Russia was an "anti-

capitalist bureaucracy," because of its Leninist ideology. However it was explained that since 1917 the ideology had not determined the social structure, but had been continuously altered to suit current policies.

On the whole, the open discussion was very poor, despite the good attendance. Winding up, the speakers agreed that the argument was *not* just a matter of applying labels to Russia. Deeper issues were involved.

The debate showed up two of these issues very clearly. First, the Trotskyists are convinced that state ownership has something to do with Socialism. Second, they place great emphasis on the concept of an elite, the "leadership" or "vanguard," to whom the workers are supposed to turn in time of crisis, whereas Socialists say that since Socialism will be democratic it can only

be established democratically—when it is the will of the majority.

As a result of the debate, there was a lot of argument among students, which is all to the good. At Hull a growing number of students realise that Russia is capitalist—though there are many other falsehoods to be fought.

People often point to the rather slow growth of the Socialist movement so far. But, although the Socialist case in its entirety hasn't a very big following, certain parts of it are gaining ground fast. The blaze of publicity in celebration of 50 years' state tyranny in Russia has given added impetus to the view that Russia is *not* Socialist, *nor* a "workers' state", *nor* bureaucratic collectivist—but *state capitalist*. To encourage clear thinking about Russia is to help the spread of this truth.

STEEL

How the Liberals Lost London



Socialists, Liberals and Labour: The Struggle for London 1885-1914

by Paul Thompson, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 63s.

From the passing of the Third Reform Act to the First World War the Liberals in London depended for funds and local organisation on Nonconformist tradesmen and for votes on the working class. As Thompson puts it:

The Liberal Party... was based on a working class majority and a middle class religious minority interest. Its difficulty was to rouse the enthusiasm of the one without alienating the funds of the latter.

This book is the story of their failure to do this. They came to be replaced by the Labour Party, a thoroughly opportunist outfit which stood for much the same as them but insisted that "Labour" be represented in parliament and on the local councils by people independent of both Tories and Liberals. The best hope for the Liberals lay in the development of the "Lib-Labs", drawing trade unionists into their local organisations. Their greatest success in this was in Battersea where former Social Democrat John Burns, of the engineers, became the Liberal MP and later the first member of the working class to enter the Cabinet. There were also those who called themselves Socialists—the Social Democratic Federation, the ILP and the Fabians. So

there was a chance that the Liberals might have been replaced by a working class party openly claiming (as Labour did not till 1918) "Socialism" as its aim. The Fabians, as Thompson shows, have been able, thanks to loudmouths like Shaw, to inflate their own significance in this period both on the Liberals (for at first they stood for "permeation") and on Labour.

The working class in London was largely indifferent to religion. It had no nonconformist background. Quite the contrary, for there was a long tradition of secularism amongst politically minded London workers. It was this, argues Thompson, that opened the way for the SDF with its crude Marxism as the most successful "socialist" party in London rather than for the ILP with its moralizing that went down so well in the North. The working class in London at least saw through that and the ILP found their nonconformist vocabulary out of place. The SDF was a peculiar organisation. It was set up in 1884 with Hyndman as leader; it accepted the class struggle and pioneered the spread of Marxist ideas amongst the working class in Britain. It had two great drawbacks from the Socialist point of view: Hyndman and its programme of "stepping stones" to Socialism. These immediate demands differed little from those of radical Liberals. When the Labour Representation Committee (to become the

Labour Party in 1906) was set up in 1900 the SDF was affiliated to it but withdrew the next year. The SDF then tried its luck at becoming an independent force. This was not unrealistic since it was clear that Labour really depended on the Liberals for seats in parliament (We now know that for the 1906 election there was a secret pact between Ramsay MacDonald and Herbert Gladstone to let some Labourites in if they would stand down in other places). However, the SDF attacks on Labourism were a little disingenuous since on the local level they too made deals with Labour and the Progressives (as the Liberals called themselves for municipal politics).

In 1904 some former SDF members set up the Socialist Party of Gt. Britain which rejected such opportunism, had no "reform programme and declared that the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party". When it contested local elections there were no deals or compromises (Incidentally Thompson is wrong when he says that the Socialist Party scorned trade unions: we have always considered the economic side of the class struggle necessary though limited).

Off the Labour bandwagon the SDF failed to make headway. In 1907 it changed its name to Social Democratic Party and in 1911 became, with a few ILP branches and others the British Socialist Party. By 1911 it was back in the fold but by now it was clear that the Liberals were to be replaced by the non-Liberal, non-Marxist Labour Party.

When the war came the BSP split, with a majority against. These later disappeared into the so-called Communist Party. The others formed their own National Socialist Party and later became the SDF again, lingering on till 1939. The Socialist Party of course opposed the war and is still an independent party.

Thompson's book discusses the subject in great detail, perhaps in too great detail for the ordinary reader. Nevertheless it will be useful to all students of working class history. Interesting is his argument that "London with its lack of working class nonconformity and its secularist traditions offered no strong resistance to Marxist theory". For, for good or ill, our Party is in this London working class tradition with our complete opposition to anything that smacks of religion, our emphasis on understanding, education and rational argument, our leaderless democratic organisation, our opposition to all censorship and our open meetings.

A.L.B.

Marx's Daughter

**The Life of Eleanor Marx. 1855-1898
A Socialist Tragedy**

by Chushicki Tsuzuki. O.U.P. 45/-.

Born 16th January, 1855, Eleanor Marx was the sixth child of Karl Marx, co-founder of the scientific socialist movement. Marx took care to provide his daughters with the best education he could afford. Eleanor developed with unusual rapidity, at the age of nine writing letters to her uncle, Lion Philips, commenting on the international political situation. Later on, no doubt at least partly due to the influence of her father, her main concern became the socialist and working class movements.

Her main political work was achieved with the co-operation of Dr. Edward Aveling, a socialist lecturer who became interested in Socialism in the early 1880's. It is not known exactly when Eleanor and Aveling met, but it was probably in 1882. Soon after they began to live together in free association. Both were opposed to a formal marriage, which was not possible anyway since Aveling was already married but separated from his wife (who, according to Engels, was highly religious and ran away with a priest!).

By 1884 Eleanor and Aveling associated themselves with the recently organised Social Democratic Federation, while Aveling was still President of the North Western (London) Branch of the National Secular Society.

The SDF, though claiming to be socialist, was in fact a basically reformist organisation dominated by its leader, H. M. Hyndman. Largely as a result of a disagreement over Hyndman's dictatorial position a group, including Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling, left the Federation toward the end of 1884 in order to form a separate organisation. This was the Socialist League, which tended to oppose parliamentary action. Despite the presence in it of such as Eleanor Marx and Aveling, this organisation was eventually taken over by the anarchists and soon became defunct. Later, Aveling participated in the formation of the Independent Labour Party, a definitely reformist organisation, at a conference in Bradford in 1893. Only a few years later, Eleanor was to meet her tragic end. On 31st March, 1898 she committed suicide, taking prussic acid.

The movements such as the SDF in which Eleanor Marx became involved

were essentially reformist and therefore, non-socialist. As with all such movements, these became completely reformist, concerned only with patching up the capitalist system. Eleanor Marx made an invaluable contribution to the evolution of the working-class movement, industrial as well as political. in Britain. D.S.

Revolution

A Short History of the Russian Revolution

by Joel Carmichael, *Sphere*. 5s.

The fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik coup last November brought with it a crop of books, and so also the problem of sorting the wheat from the chaff. This paperback edition of an earlier work is one we can recommend. In two hundred or so pages Carmichael presents a readable and accurate account of events in Russia between March and November (leaning heavily on a work by the leftwing Menshevik Sukhanov which he himself has translated into English). His assessment of these events is also good and comes very near to ours.

Carmichael sees the elitist side of Bolshevik theory and also that they, once in power in a backward peasant country, were doomed to failure. They could not set up Socialism and inevitably "the former band of professional revolutionaries was radically transformed from a group of intellectuals into a corps of administrators".

A.L.B.

History of the Russian Revolution

by Leon Trotsky,

Sphere Books (3 volumes) 30s.

This is the first paper-back edition of Trotsky's masterly book. The three volumes are here unabridged and also contain the valuable appendices. Together they are an essential reference work and, at the same time, a refreshing antidote to the official Stalinist "histories" of the revolution. Even when his revolutionary enthusiasm gets the better of his theoretical grasp of Marxism (the "law" of combined development and so on) Trotsky remains an immensely attractive thinker and writer. But in the end socialists must apply to Trotsky the verdict which he himself gave on Stalin: "It is well known that people make history without understanding its laws..."

J.C.

Labour's Leftwing

The Labour Party is a party of capitalism; one of the two political machines that the working class in Britain regularly elect to control the government in the interests of the capitalists. Of this there can be no doubt. The Labour Party have never had Socialism as their aim. It is true that in the past they did use, or rather misuse, the word *socialism* more than they do today. But to them Socialism meant nationalisation or state capitalism. Now they prefer to speak of the *New Britain* — a fact which we Socialists welcome as it means that the name of Socialism will be dragged less through the mud by being linked with the war-making, strike-breaking, anti-union laws and wage freezes of the various Labour governments.

The Labour Party is organised to run the machinery of government. Their programme and policy is decided by the Leader and the leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party. It is controlled from the top downwards. In other words it is not a democratic party and the membership do not lay down its policy. The aftermath of the 1960 Scarborough Conference decision in favour of unilateral disarmament is a glaring example of this. The parliamentary leaders and the Leader refused to accept this decision and justified this refusal on the ground that they were responsible not to the Party but to the electorate. As the electorate did not in fact back unilateral disarmament this was a telling point. In fact it gives us a clue to the reason for the ineffectiveness of the Labour Party generally and of its left-wing in particular.

Labour MPs are elected on the votes of people who are not Socialists and so are effectively their prisoner. They cannot go much further than those who voted for them are prepared to go, and certainly they can do nothing for Socialism. For Socialism cannot be established over the heads of a working class who do not understand it. Socialism can only be established by people who understand and want it and who democratically set out to get it. The Labour Party does not—and never has—seek support at elections on a Socialist programme. It has always done so on a programme of trying to reform capitalism. The left-wing also suggest a reform programme, only one less practical than that of the parliamentary leaders. But they are elected, not on their own

programme, but on that of the leaders—a fact which gives these leaders the whip-hand. They can use the passive voters who backed their programme against the programme suggested by the parliamentary leftwing and the constituency activists.

The parliamentary left-wing, of course, have a well-earned reputation for ineffectiveness. Many put this down to the peculiar atmosphere of the House of Commons which is supposed to entice them away from their principles. This is not the case at all. They have been elected on the official Labour programme and not on one of more nationalisation, less defence and the like. They are the prisoner of those who elected them, and also of those who share the views of those who elected them. They know this, and so do the parliamentary leaders who thus can treat them with utter contempt. To repeat: it is not the fact that they are in parliament that makes leftwing MPs spineless. It is *how* they got there. The lesson is clear: if Labourites are forced even to water down their reform programme, to expect Socialism to be established through the Labour Party is just plain stupid.

Despite the antagonism between the leftwing and the parliamentary leaders and the odd situation where the Leader is really hated by many members, the leftwing does play a useful and essential role for the Labour Party. That role is to persuade doubters that the Labour Party does have the interests of the workers at heart. When talking to party activists even the official leadership will talk of Socialism. Once again this is to reassure doubters who may be beginning to see through the Labour Party.

Seeking support on the basis it does, when elected the Labour Party has no choice but to run capitalism. And capitalism cannot be made to work in the interest of those who work for a wage or salary. It can only work in the interests of the owning class. Any party which takes on the task of running capitalism is sooner or later brought into direct conflict with the working class. The economic forces of capitalism smash the grandiose social reform schemes to pieces. This has happened with every Labour government. After the war troops were used to break down strikes; strikers were put on trial; production of the atom bomb started and the Korean war backed. Labour governments act only as they can: as caretakers for capitalism.

Socialists would never think of joining such a party as Labour any more than they would the Liberal or Tory parties.

Labour has always in practice stood for capitalism and even its theory of how to improve the lot of the working class was hopelessly mistaken. Once again, Socialism can only be established by people who want it. No gain can come to a Socialist party from opportunism or compromise. To achieve Socialism a Socialist party must seek the support only of convinced socialists. This is the policy of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. It is the only sound way to build a Socialist party, as the history of the Labour Party well shows. A.L.B.

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DARTFORD 1st and 3rd Fridays in month 8 pm, Mar. 1 & 7, Cyril Road, Bexleyheath and March 15th at 32 Ickleton Road, Motttingham, SE9. Correspondence: W. G. Catt at above latter address.

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LEWISHAM Mondays 8 pm, Co-op Hall (Room 1), Davenport Road, Bushey Green, Cuford, SE6. Correspondence: SPGB, Co-op Hall, Davenport Road, SE6.

MID HERTS Regular meetings every Monday 8 pm in the Hatfield, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City areas. Correspondence: H. Mattingly, 27 Woodstock Road, Broadwater, Herts.

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SOUTH WEST LONDON Mondays 8.30 pm, 52 Clapham High Street, SW4. Correspondence: Secretary at this address.

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Meetings

LONDON OUTDOOR MEETINGS

Mondays: Lincolns Inn Fields 1-2 pm

Thursday: Tower Hill 1-2 pm

Sundays: Hyde Park 3 pm

CAMDEN GROUP

The Enterprise, Chalk Farm Road,
(opposite The Round House and
Chalk Farm Tube Station—
Buses 24, 31, 45, 68, 187, 239)

Monday 11th March. 8 pm

The Poetry of Revolt

Speaker: I. Jones

Monday 25th March

Socialism and Nationalism

Speaker: E. Grant

WEST LONDON

Westcott Lodge, The Mall, Hammersmith
Fridays 8 pm

HARINGEY

Civic Centre, Wood Green. 8 pm
Fridays.

March 8

Development of Capitalism in China

Speaker: K. Knight.

March 22

Rise and Fall of Co-ops

Speaker: I. McLaughlin.

HACKNEY

Trades Hall, Valette Street. E8
Wednesdays. 8.30 pm

13th March

The Division of Wealth Today

Speaker: M. Judd

27th March

The Co-op Movement

Speaker: I. McLaughlin

HULL

Weekly discussion group meetings on
Sundays at 8 pm at the Blue Bell.
Lowgate, Hull.

WESTMINSTER

Royal Oak, York Street, W1
(near Marylebone Station)
Wednesdays 9 pm

6th March

**"Camden Campaign for Human Rights
Year"—its aims and objects**

Speaker: Mr. D. C. Rose

20th March

Capitalism: The Giant Octopus

Speaker: A. Potts

CENTRAL LONDON MEETING

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1
Friday 12th April 7.30 pm

Copies of the new pamphlet on Labour
Government will be available at this
meeting.

GLASGOW

**Sundays at the Woodside Public Hall
at 7.30 pm**

March 3rd

POETS OF PROTEST

March 10th

VIETNAM BLOODBATH

March 17th

EDUCATION OR BRAINWASHING

March 24th

THE MARRIAGE MARKET

March 31st

EDGE OF ABUNDANCE

Central London Indoor Meetings

Four Sunday meetings in March

March 3rd

MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

March 10th

WHAT'S WRONG WITH EDUCATION?

March 17th

THE MEDICINE INDUSTRY

March 24th

THE NATURE OF SOCIALISM

These four meetings close another successful
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MANCHESTER

Every Thursday at 8 pm

Waggon and Horses (corner Bridge St. and
Southgate, Deansgate)

MANCHESTER OUTDOOR MEETING

Every Sunday evening at

The Shambles

EDGWARE GROUP

Edgware Library, Hale Lane.

Thursday March 21st 8.15 pm

The Russian Revolution

Speaker: A. Buick

BRIGHTON

Co-op Hall, London Road

PM Backing Socialism

Speaker: R. Guy

Monday March 4th, 8 pm

MID HERTS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

October 1967 to May 1968

at Stevenage, Bedwell Community Centre
Mondays 8 pm

18th March

The Labour Theory of Value

22nd April

The Marginal Theory of Value

20th May

Money, Banking and Crises

WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Campus Library

Monday 11 March 8 pm

Our Thoughts on Mao

Speaker: K. Knight

STEVENAGE

Bedwell Community Centre

Monday 18th March 8 pm

Labour Theory of Value

Speaker: A. Buick

HATFIELD

County Library, Queensway

Monday 25th March 8 pm

The Road to Socialism

Speaker from the YCL

LETCHEWORTH

County Library, Broadway

Thursday March 7th 8 pm

Labour's Record

Speaker: C. May

Thursday April 4th, 8 pm

Labour's Future

Speaker: T. Giles

LEWISHAM

Town Hall

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

Monday March 18th 8 pm

BRISTOL

The Coffee Pot Club, 14 Frederick Place.

Clifton, 8 (Nr. Pro-Cathedral)

Wednesday March 13 at 8.30 pm

What is Socialism?

Speaker: J. Flowers.

Kingsley Hall, Oldmarket, Bristol

Monday March 25 at 7.30 pm

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